

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of July 27, 2021**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell (absent), Vice-Chair Julie H. Goodrich, Board members Nathaniel Miller, Charles Morse, and John Stevens. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Mark C. Anarumo (President, Norwich University), Daphne Larkin (Director of Media Relations & Community Affairs, Norwich University), John Helfant (Police Chief), Don Rhoades (Friends of Northfield Dog Park), Gary Kessler (Green Mountain Stage Race), Susan Stillinger, Gordon Bock, Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy Hill.

Acting Chair Goodrich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Participants had the option of attending the meeting either in person or remotely through Go-to-Meeting.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE.** Those persons present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)

- a. Mark C. Anarumo, President, Norwich University (NU).** President Anarumo noted that although he has remotely addressed the Select Board members numerous times over the past year regarding NU practices and procedures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this is the first time he has spoken to them in person. He now wanted to provide them with updated information on preparations for the arrival of students for the Fall 2021 semester as well as important events during this semester. President Anarumo said the first ones arriving will be student leaders and student-athletes on Tuesday, August 10, 2021. NU freshmen cadets (i.e., "Rooks") will arrive on Sunday, August 22, 2021 and other new students two (2) days later (08/24/21). Returning upperclassmen will return over the weekend of August 28-29, 2021 and classes will begin on Monday, August 30, 2021. The plan is for the campus to be fully open with in-person classes, fully-attended sporting events, etc. One of the highlights of the Fall 2021 sports season will be the first nighttime NU home football game on Friday, September 3, 2021 versus Salve Regina. President Anarumo said there are strong enrollment numbers for both new and returning students. He added that NU students who wish to volunteer in the community will be allowed to do so again provided state and CDC guidelines are followed. Contingency plans have been put in place in case the pandemic reasserts itself locally and the emphasis will be on working to keep the NU campus as well as the Northfield community as safe as possible. President Anarumo said current NU faculty and staff members were required to receive COVID-19 vaccinations as soon as they became eligible. New and returning unvaccinated students will be required to be vaccinated as soon as possible. Even with permitted medical and religious exemptions, President Anarumo expects a campus-wide vaccination rate of about 98%. This will be far above nationwide standards for colleges and universities.

President Anarumo said that there will be a full Homecoming celebration this year (last year's was "virtual") that will include his formal inauguration as the twenty-fourth (24th) President of Norwich University. The celebrations will start on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 with a community social starting at 7:00 p.m. on the Crescent. Although the arrangements have not been finalized, he hopes that day's Northfield Farmers Market will be relocated to the NU campus that day as in years past. President Anarumo looks forward to introducing himself and his family to the Northfield community. A second community social will be held later in the semester. The following day (09/22/21), the formal presidential inauguration will take place in the Shapiro Fieldhouse starting at 10:00 a.m. The ceremony will be open to all but NU asks that those wishing to attend pre-register so it can prepare beforehand for the number of attendees. There will be various student artistic performances, drills, etc. as part of the ceremony to be followed by a carillon concert and nighttime (9:00 p.m.) fireworks display.

The rest of the week will have the traditional Homecoming activities including the Saturday alumni parade and afternoon football game versus Endicott College. The alumni classes that would have been honored with special dinners, etc. during last year's celebration (i.e., those with class years ending in "0" or "5") will be honored this year along with the alumni class years (those ending in "1" and "6") on the regular recognition schedule. President Anarumo expects about 4,000 people to attend the various Homecoming events. President Anarumo said the full schedule of the week's activities is available at the website <https://alumni.norwich.edu/homecoming>.

In addition, NU will host the International Symposium of Military Academies (ISOMA) from October 4 through October 8, 2021. This is the first time this symposium has been held in the United States and this is a great honor for the university. There will be participants from over forty (40) countries and President Anarumo expects some important personages to be in attendance. Other important events during the Fall semester include Parent and Family weekend, which will be held starting on Friday, October 8, 2021. Participants will "enjoy guided tours, receptions, athletics, and demonstrations of the heritage of the country's oldest private military college." The annual Colby Award and Norwich University Military Writers' Symposium will be held November 3-4, 2021 and the focus of this year's presentations will be the international implications of the effects of global warming on the arctic region.

President Anarumo asked if the Select Board members had any questions. Board member Stevens asked if campus visitors would be required to be vaccinated. President Anarumo said NU had no authority to mandate this and all facilities will remain open to the public. Board member Morse had no questions but commended President Anarumo for his excellent presentation. Daphne Larkin, NU's Director of Media Relations & Community Affairs, said she and other administrators and staff members are looking forward to in-person meetings with students, community members, etc. and thereby getting back to campus normality. Acting Chair Goodrich thanked President Anarumo for appearing tonight and invited him to return whenever he wanted.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **John Helfant, Police Chief.** Chief Helfant said all has been going well with the Northfield Police Department (NPD) and they have been able to maintain 24/7 coverage of the community. As two (2) full-time NPD officers remain on military deployment and there is one vacant position, Chief Helfant has been filling shifts himself with the other three (3) full-time officers. There is one applicant for the vacant position and the background check is underway. One positive development is that one of the deployed officers may be returning earlier (August) than had been previously expected (October). Chief Helfant said the department has been responding to all calls for service, as can be seen by recent stories in local newspapers regarding recent arrests, etc. He asked if there were any questions. Board member Stevens asked about the status of the 2014 NPD cruiser. Chief Helfant said it had been in good running condition until fairly recently. It now is now out of service for as yet undetermined reasons. There being no other questions, Acting Chair Goodrich thanked Chief Helfant for tonight's report.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **July 13, 2021 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **July 19, 2021 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Board member Miller abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #02-22.** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve Warrant #02-22 in the amount of \$667,725.25. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through July 11, 2021.** Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Morse, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$107,512.71. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Select Board Authorization for Northfield Dog Park.** Manager Schulz said a local group (Friends of Northfield Dog Park) led by Don Rhoades has put a lot of effort into their proposal to establish a local dog park on a FEMA buyout property on Water Street. Mr. Rhoades has addressed the Select Board members three (3) times already and has discussed the research done on successful dog parks around the country and the rules that have been developed to deal with aggressive dogs, communicable canine diseases, etc. Manager Schulz noted that the property owners abutting the proposed park site have been contacted and he believes all potential issues have been addressed. Mr. Rhoades would like a formal endorsement of his proposal at this time before proceeding with park design, fundraising, etc. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Miller, to authorize the establishment of the Northfield Dog Park to be situated on municipal property located on Water Street. Mr. Rhoades said he has spoken to Robert LaClair, who owns the apartment building next to the proposed site, and allayed any concerns he had about tenant parking, etc. He also has reached out to a NU professor and the dog park design will be a class project this coming school year. Board member Morse noted Manager Schulz will be working with Mr. Rhoades regarding all logistics, which might include drafting an update of the current animal control ordinance in order to make dog park rules enforceable. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **South Main Street Sidewalk Project.** Manager Schulz said there has been great progress on this project over the past couple weeks. The contractor (Josh Fenoff Siteworks, LLC) is confident the project can be completed in about a week if the weather cooperates. Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has been very helpful in expediting the process through direct interaction with the workers, etc.
- b. **Highway Department Update.** Manager Schulz said the grader has been repaired and is back in service. A second grader has been rented since the gravel resurfacing of some of the backroads, including Berlin Pond Road, has begun. The crushed stone put down is smaller than in past years and a rented roller will further crush it right after it is put down. This should eliminate the problem of damaged tires, etc.
- c. **Highway Paving.** Manager Schulz said paving work on Slate Avenue, Carpenter Street, and West Hill Road will commence by the middle of next month. The Water/Sewer Department will coordinate with the Slate Avenue pavers to ensure the stormwater work done there recently isn't adversely affected by the new paving. There had been some thought of repaving Central Street this year but that has been delayed until needed stormwater work is done there. The road condition is not too bad at this time. Board member Morse doesn't remember a conversation about repaving Carpenter Street. Manager Schulz said the RSMS (Road System Management System) Plan indicates it is due for repaving. This was discussed by the Town Highway Subcommittee. Acting Chair Goodrich noted the road also needs to be repaved after recent utility work.
- d. **South Main Stormwater Project.** Manager Schulz received an email from Tom Brown from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) stating that the state will provide funds for this project provided the municipality meets certain "readiness-to-proceed milestones" in coming months. This includes making preparations for holding a bond vote, which probably would be in conjunction with the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Board member Morse noted that according to Manager Schulz's written report, the state funding share of this project has been reduced from the previously indicated forty percent (40%) down to eleven percent (11%). This was quite a change. Manager Schulz agreed this was a disappointing development and he will be meeting remotely with ANR officials in the next couple days to express his concerns. He added that federal funds will supplement what the state provides. Board member Morse felt we have been misled by ANR officials regarding the state's financial commitment to assisting municipalities pay for such stormwater projects designed to meet new state mandates. Manager Schulz said one problem is that Northfield is competing for grant funds with other municipalities with shovel-ready projects.

- e. **Cross Brothers Dam Removal Project.** Manager Schulz has been working with the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Vermont Dam Removal Task Force on locating outside funding for this project. Unfortunately, they have been informed that a FEMA grant application was unsuccessful. This was a disappointment as the project does have flood mitigation potential and FEMA usually supports such efforts. There are other outside funding opportunities that will be pursued. Acting Chair Goodrich asked if this project can still be completed before the scheduled replacement of the nearby Main Street Bridge in 2025. Manager Schulz believes the dam removal can be completed before then.

X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Lovers Lane.** Board member Stevens said the surface of Lovers Lane is much improved after its recent grading. Manager Schulz said this gravel road gets a lot of heavy traffic, including big trucks, who use it as a shortcut from Vermont Route 12 to Route 12A.
- b. **Cox Brook Road Crack Repairs.** Board member Stevens asked about the status of this project. Manager Schulz said a second quote has been received and the work will cost about \$8,000. It should be completed before the end of next month.
- c. **NAVI Golf Tournament.** Acting Chair Goodrich noted the Northfield Ambulance Volunteers, Inc. (NAVI) will hold an invitational golf tournament on Sunday, September 19, 2021 at the Northfield Country Club. The proceeds will benefit the Betty Podgwaite Scholarship Fund as well as EMS training activities. Registration forms are available at the Northfield Ambulance Bay, the Northfield Country Club, and on the municipal website at www.northfield-vt.gov/public-notices.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Gary Kessler, Green Mountain Stage Race.** Mr. Kessler said that this popular bicycle road race is being held again in 2021 after being cancelled last year due to the pandemic. The second stage of this race will be held on Saturday, September 4, 2021 and the route will start at the Randolph High School, travel northward up Vermont Route 12A, cross over to Vermont Route 12 at the Northfield intersection, continue southward on Vermont Route 12, and conclude at the Ayers Brook Goat Dairy in Randolph. This route distance is thirty-seven (37) miles and some advanced bikers will do two (2) or three (3) laps for totals of seventy-four (74) and one hundred and eleven (111) miles. Mr. Kessler said Vermont State Police will accompany the bikers along the circuit and he also will work with local police regarding traffic control, etc. The first group of bikers will leave Randolph around 8:30 a.m. and the race should be completed by 3:30 p.m. He expects about six hundred (600) participants this year. The Board members have no concerns provided Mr. Kessler reaches out to Chief Helfant regarding local traffic control, etc. Mr. Kessler will do that. There also will be considerable advertisement of this event beforehand, including Front Porch Forum, so residents aren't surprised on the day.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Stevens, seconded by Board member Morse, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of August 10, 2021.